

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the previous amendments and the following remarks.

Claim 18 is amended to address the issue raised in paragraph "1" on page two of the Official Action. Withdrawal of the objection to Claim 18 is therefore respectfully requested.

Before turning to the remainder of the Official Action, a brief discussion of disclosed substrate storage containers is provided. A substrate storage container includes a container body 1, a door for opening and closing the front of the container body 2, and an inner-pressure adjustment device 40 attached to at least one of the container body 1 and the door 2 for adjusting the pressure inside the container body 1 closed with the door 2. The inner-pressure adjustment device 40 includes an attachment cylinder 41 formed in cylindrical shape having a first opening at one end face and a second opening smaller than the first opening at an other end face, as illustrated in Fig. 4. As discussed in lines 8-15 of page 17 of the application, the attachment cylinder 41 is made of an elastic material.

A hollow filter support structure 43 is fitted into the attachment cylinder 41, and a filter 46 is held inside the filter support structure 43. Shelf elements 2 for supporting substrates are formed on both interior sides of the container body 1. As illustrated in Fig. 11, at least part of the substrate contact area 22 of each shelf element 2 is formed with a low-frictional resistance portion 23 that is lower in frictional resistance than the non substrate contact area of the shelf element. As discussed in lines 3-9 of page 23 of the application, each low-frictional resistance

portion is formed by a texture transferred from a surface of a mold to a surface of the shelf element.

Turning now to the Official Action, Claim 8 is rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,732,877, hereinafter Wu.

Amended Claim 8 recites a substrate storage container including a container body, a door for opening and closing the front of the container body, and an inner-pressure adjustment device attached to at least one of the container body and the door for adjusting the pressure inside the container body closed with the door. The inner-pressure adjustment device includes an elastic attachment cylinder formed in cylindrical shape having a first opening at one end face and a second opening smaller than the first opening at an other end face. A hollow filter support structure is fitted into the attachment cylinder, and a filter is held inside the filter support structure.

Wu discloses an air vent plug arrangement for a substrate storage container. The air vent plug arrangement is mounted at an air vent 80 of a bottom panel 81, and includes a mounting ring 1 having a top side edge 10 fastened to the air vent 80 and a plug body 2 having a plug cap 4 thereon and a filter 5 therein.

The Official Action takes the position that Wu's plug body 2 constitutes an attachment cylinder, and that Wu's mounting ring 1 and plug cap 4 constitute a filter support structure. However, the plug body 2 is not an elastic attachment cylinder formed in cylindrical shape having a first opening at one end face and a second opening smaller than the first opening at an other end face. Moreover, the mounting ring 1 and plug cap 4 are not fitted into the plug body 2, and the filter 5 is not held inside the mounting ring 1 and plug cap 4.

Thus, Wu does not disclose a substrate storage container having an inner-pressure adjustment device including an elastic attachment cylinder possessing a cylindrical shape having a first opening at one end face and a second opening smaller than the first opening at an other end face, a hollow filter support structure fitted into the attachment cylinder, and a filter held inside the filter support structure, in combination with the other features recited in amended Claim 8.

Claim 8 is therefore allowable over Wu, and withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 8 is respectfully requested.

Claim 8 is also rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,032,802, hereinafter Ejima.

Ejima discloses a filter 27 holding a filter material 31 and having an annular gasket 33 disposed at a flange 29 of the filter 27.

The Official Action takes the position that Ejima's annular gasket 33 constitutes an attachment cylinder, and that Ejima's flange 29 constitutes a filter support structure. However, the annular gasket 33 is not an elastic attachment cylinder formed in cylindrical shape having a first opening at one end face and a second opening smaller than the first opening at an other end face. Moreover, the flange 29 is not fitted into the annular gasket 33; if anything, the annular gasket 33 is fitted into a groove of the flange 29.

Thus, Ejima does not disclose a substrate storage container having an inner-pressure adjustment device including an elastic attachment cylinder possessing a cylindrical shape having a first opening at one end face and a second opening smaller than the first opening at an other end face, a hollow filter support structure

fitted into the attachment cylinder, and a filter held inside the filter support structure, in combination with the other features recited in amended Claim 8.

Claim 8 is therefore allowable over Ejima, and withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 8 is also respectfully requested.

Claim 14, the only other pending independent claim, is rejected as being unpatentable over Wu in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,960,960, hereinafter Yamamoto, and also as being unpatentable over Ejima in view of Yamamoto.

Amended Claim 14 recites a substrate storage container including a container body, a door for opening and closing the front of the container body, and an inner-pressure adjustment device attached to at least one of the container body and the door for adjusting the pressure inside the container body closed with the door. Shelf elements for supporting substrates are formed on both interior sides of the container body. At least part of the substrate contact area of each shelf element is formed with a low-frictional resistance portion that is lower in frictional resistance than the non substrate contact area of the shelf element. Each low-frictional resistance portion is formed by a texture transferred from a surface of a mold to a surface of the shelf element.

Yamamoto discloses a wafer carrier including grooves 106 storing wafers, and a movable rod 201 provided with a plurality of elastic pieces 203.

The Official Action appears to take the position that Yamamoto's grooves 106 constitutes shelf elements, and that Yamamoto's elastic pieces 203 constitute "low-frictional resistance portions". However, Yamamoto's elastic pieces 203 are not low-frictional resistance portions of the grooves 106 lower in frictional resistance than non substrate contact areas of the grooves 106. Moreover, each elastic piece 203 is

not formed by a texture transferred from a surface of a mold to a surface of a groove 106.

Thus, Yamamoto does not disclose a substrate storage container having shelf elements for supporting substrates formed on both interior sides of a container body, wherein at least part of the substrate contact area of each shelf element is formed with a low-frictional resistance portion that is lower in frictional resistance than the non substrate contact area of the shelf element, and each low-frictional resistance portion is formed by a texture transferred from a surface of a mold to a surface of the shelf element, in combination with the other features recited in amended Claim 8. Moreover, neither Wu nor Ejima cure the above-noted deficiencies of Yamamoto.

Accordingly, Claim 14 is allowable over both Wu in view of Yamamoto and Ejima in view of Yamamoto, and withdrawal of the rejections of Claim 14 is respectfully requested.

The dependent claims are allowable at least by virtue of their dependence from allowable independent claims. Thus, a detailed discussion of the additional distinguishing features recited in the dependent claims is not set forth at this time.

Early and favorable action with respect to this application is respectfully requested.

Should any questions arise in connection with this application or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference with the undersigned would be helpful

in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application the undersigned respectfully requests that he be contacted at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

BUCHANAN INGERSOLL & ROONEY PC

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By: Peter T. deVore

Matthew L. Schneider
Registration No. 32814

Peter T. deVore
Registration No. 60361

P.O. Box 1404
Alexandria, VA 22313-1404
703 836 6620